



North Atlantic Right Whale

Eubalaena glacialis

Quick facts

Order Cetartiodactyla

Conservation status

Global *Critically endangered*



Global trend *Decreasing*

Size 14 - 16 m (max 18 m), females larger

Weight 50,000 - 56,000 kg, occasionally up to 90,000 kg

Life span Unknown; one individual known to be at least 60 years old

The North Atlantic right whale is a rotund, square-chinned, large headed whale which lacks a dorsal fin. Since 1920, sightings in eastern North Atlantic have been sporadic, with only 7 records in UK & Irish waters in the past 50 years.

Habitat

No specific habitat has been identified in the eastern North Atlantic. Historical whaling records suggest that most North Atlantic right whales taken off Great Britain and Ireland were <40 km from land, over the continental shelf.

Behaviour

Social behaviour is poorly understood, but generally seen singly or in pairs. May gather in groups of up to 40 during courtship.

Diet & Feeding

Skim feeds on zooplankton at surface and at depth; primarily feeds on copepods, occasionally on euphausiids (krill). No feeding has been documented recently in eastern North Atlantic.

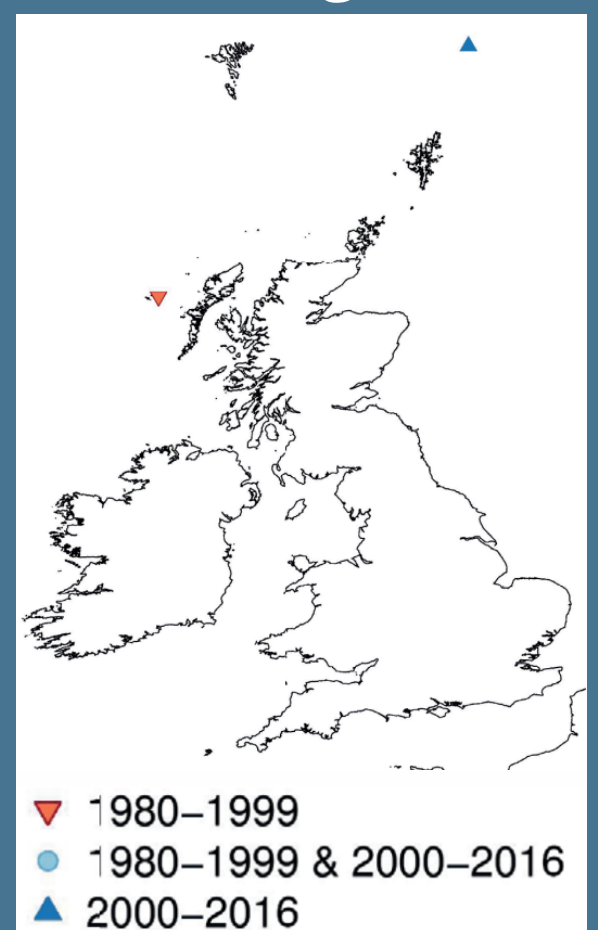
Reproduction

Calves born early December – late March after gestation period of 12 – 13 months.

Conservation & Threats

Current eastern North Atlantic stock a few tens of individuals at most. Best hope for return of right whale to European waters is recolonisation from western North Atlantic stock. Historically, whaling took a heavy toll on the population; now, collisions with large vessels and entanglement in fishing gear account for over 50% of all mortality.

Range



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